

Moshier Park actually began in downtown Burien. It came about this way: Alexander and Zilla Bigelow purchased five acres on the north side of 152nd at 4th Ave. S.W. in 1904, having walked the five miles from South Park to Burien. Their neighbors were the Garfield Mercer and Will Hill families. The Bigelows slept in an old tent and hauled water from a spring near Five Corners until they could get their "lumber in and a shack built." Alexander was a hard-working sort who cut and split rails and posts; cut, peeled and dug post holes for the first telephone line in Burien; and routinely traveled to Seattle--the first five miles on foot--in search of odd jobs. ("As told by Mrs. Bigelow," Our Burien, pp. 70-72)

Eventually the Bigelows donated property on 4th Ave. S.W. and S.W. 152nd for a county playfield in the Burien area. In subsequent years of commercial and retail growth, this area became the heart of the business district, and the property was exchanged for a parcel at 6th Avenue South and South 156th. "It is now Moshier Field and has a club house on it." (Our Burien, p. 117)

In 1956 George Wyse became superintendent of King County Parks, a position he held until 1976. The 1950s saw the expansion of park use of school facilities with the signing of the first contract with the Highline School District in 1958 for joint park-school use. This agreement involved the Parks Department developing the outdoor facilities at Moshier Park and gaining use of the Highline High School gym for recreational programs. (History of King County's Park, Recreation and Open Space System, Caroline Tobin, March, 1992)

The "Highline Project" at Highline High School was promoted by Associated Clubs of South King County. Bill Moshier of Shorewood was active in this group and influential in developing the plan for the extensive array of ball fields. When Bill died suddenly, Moshier Field was named in his memory. ([Shorewoodonthesound.org](http://Shorewoodonthesound.org) website, 1950-1959.) Moshier served as a King County Commissioner in 1958, and was one of the initial members of Metro's 15-member governing Council.

In 1962 King County established the first county arts center and year-round arts program at William Moshier Memorial Park. Between 1962 and 1972 the Center was redesigned to accommodate pottery and jewelry programs.

In 1968 King County voters approved Proposition 6, a Forward Thrust Parks and Recreation bond, which included \$39,400 for facilities improvements at Moshier Park. ([HistoryLink.org](http://HistoryLink.org) website) The Moshier complex included three lighted softball/baseball fields, one lighted 90-foot softball/baseball field, two lighted football/soccer fields and public restroom. ("Exhibit A," King County Parks in the City of Burien, King County Office of Financial Management, February 19, 1993)

Moshier Park was one of nine King County Parks in Burien that was transferred to the City in 1994.

## Highline Memorial Stadium

Highline Memorial Stadium, which lies adjacent to the eastern edge of Moshier Park, has hosted thousands of sporting events and recreational activities for over 80 years. The following is a brief account of its history:

Highline High School opened in 1924. An area just south of the original building was graded and prepared for a dirt and sand athletic field. Student and faculty work parties kept it in usable shape.

Eventually a small, wooden grandstand was built on the north side, and a few open bleacher seats on the south. This “unturfed” field worked well for about 16 years. As additions to the high school encroached on the field, the school district purchased land to the south, and moved the field.

The grandstand was moved about 300 feet south. A new field was developed, with an improved cinder track. The south and west ends of the field were fenced. Later, tall wooden poles were obtained through Puget Sound Power, and lights installed.

During World War II many students had to leave school before they could finish their senior year. As reports of casualties of Highline’s young men increased, it was proposed that the field be developed as a memorial to the Highline men lost in the service.

When the war ended, plans were made for an improved turfed field, and for more wooden bleachers. A cyclone fence was installed around the entire field. Landscaping was done at the east end, and a memorial placed. Not only was Highline the first school in the west to launch such a project; it was also the first student body in the U.S. to attempt such an undertaking.

To finance the project, a scrap-iron drive was launched. The pile reached the length of a football field, and brought in thousands of dollars. Season-ticket sales, business support and student entertainment activities added to the rapidly growing fund. This effort received national attention, and led to similar efforts by other school districts.

The five-year Memorial tickets raised \$7,625. Business sources added another \$5,301. Student activities, including the scrap drive, provided \$17,522. The field cost \$29,097. The school district spent only \$4,000 to cover the remainder.

This was a community effort, typical of the Highline School District. Other contributors were King County Commissioner Ed Munro, Puget Sound Power and Light, Five Corners Nursery, the *Highline Gazette*, Anderson Construction Co., Highline Student Association, and many merchants.

Memorial Field served Highline High School well for many years. But as the District exploded in the 1950s into the fastest-growing district in the west, four more high schools

were needed—as fast as possible. Memorial Field also needed larger and more permanent bleachers than the old wooden ones.

Planning was begun for an improved Memorial Stadium that could serve all the new high schools. Plans included a new permanent grandstand; a new track; improved landscaping; better crowd controls; new dressing rooms; complete fencing; and artificial turf. Large savings resulted in not having to duplicate facilities at each new high school.

Architect Ralph Burkhardt designed the grandstand. Athletic Director Jack Mackenroth learned that Texas Tech College was replacing one-season-old artificial turf. Highline thus acquired a nearly new carpet for less than half the cost of a new one. Building one quality facility was a practical move. Not only was it economical; it provided a premier facility for athletics which could not have been duplicated at all five high schools.

Memorial Field is an enduring expression of our memory of those young men from our area who gave their lives in World War II. For “the rest of the story” about Memorial Field, and a list of those memorialized, visit the Highline Historical Society website at <http://www.highlinehistory.org> and click on “Lest We Forget.”